

chastises the cowardice of black men. For example, Captain Nicholas McDuffy, a black man who once served on the police force and arrested a white man, discovers that his name appears on the list of the damned. He flees to New Bern and leaves his wife and son at the mercy of the white mob, which burns the family home.¹³ Wright exemplifies black manhood by defending his family and home. McDuffy relinquishes any claim to manhood when he sacrifices his family in the interest of self-preservation.

Fulton offered readers a theory to explain this cowardice. Bill Sikes exemplifies the emasculated black man. Sikes, once one of the strongest and wealthiest blacks in Wilmington but now crippled and dependent on his wife for survival, lives “in constant terror, hanging on her (his wife’s) skirts like a babe” during the riot. The couple leaves Wilmington, because, as Sikes explains to the Colonel, “I’m not goin’ ter stay in er place where a d—n scoundrel can insult ma wife an’ I can’t pect her.” Sikes protests the loss of manhood. He wishes to rekindle his manhood, and he and his wife move to New York.

Most of the blacks depicted in *Hanover* migrate, either by force or choice, to northern cities, where they find a greater degree of acceptance and safety. When Sikes proposes that they return to Wilmington, his wife declares that she will never return: “Life is not so easy here, but I can walk the streets as a lady and my children are free to play and romp without fear of being killed for accidentally or purposefully treading upon the toe of a white child.”¹⁴ The northern city also provides a better environment in which to cultivate racial pride. Rather than renounce her blackness, Pierrepont embraces her race and “nobly” represents black America in New York City. Fulton presented readers with a pessimistic story of black life in the South and portrayed the North as the best hope for the African American.

Fulton failed to overcome his literary obscurity and reach a large audience. Despite the historical basis of his account of the riot, Fulton failed to alter the dominant narrative of events. In 1902, the *Wilmington Messenger* referenced the publication of *Hanover* without even mentioning the title or author in a review of a more widely circulated fictionalization of the Wilmington Race Riot.¹⁵

***The Marrow of Tradition* by Charles Chesnutt**

The *Wilmington Messenger* devoted most of the review to Charles W. Chesnutt’s *The Marrow of Tradition* (1901), a novel that blended elements of the Wilmington Race Riot and the New Orleans Race Riot of 1900.¹⁶ Chesnutt realized the potential of a career in writing after the

¹³ Thorne, *Hanover*, pg. 107.

¹⁴ Thorne, *Hanover*, pg. 129, 134.

¹⁵ *Wilmington Messenger*, January 7, 1902, quoted in Wilson, *Whiteness*.

¹⁶ Charles Chesnutt, “Charles Chesnutt’s Own View of His New Story, *The Marrow of Tradition*,” *Cleveland World*, October 20, 1901, published in *Charles W. Chesnutt, Stories, Novels, and Essays*, ed. by Werner Sollers (Library of America, 2002): pg. 873. Scholars rarely note the influence that the New Orleans Riot had upon the novel; the events in Wilmington dominate Chesnutt’s work, but one might conclude that Josh Green, the black rebel who defends the black community from the white mob, was inspired by Robert Charles, the black rebel whose altercation with abusive police officers sparked widespread violence in New Orleans. The primary materials written by